221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[231] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [328] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 171 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief
[724] of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food.

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight.

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself.

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known.

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the nanstibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62).

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130–32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups.

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.